

Virginia Area Al-Anon Assembly, May 16-17, 2026  
Laura Lovern, VA Area World Service Delegate, Panel 65

Delegate Report  
on the  
2026 World Service Conference  
75 Years, One Purpose  
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75 ans, un but

[delegate@vaalanon.org](mailto:delegate@vaalanon.org)

[lovern.laura@gmail.com](mailto:lovern.laura@gmail.com)

**Introduction** Good afternoon. I am Laura Lovern, your VA Area Panel 65 Delegate.

**Opening** Thank you for providing me the opportunity to represent you at this year's World Service Conference (WSC). The 2026 WSC was held in Newport News, Virginia, April 20-24, followed by the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Celebration on Saturday, April 25. Ninety-one voting Conference members attended, including all 68 Area Delegates, members of the Executive Committee, members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and World Service Office (WSO) Staff Conference members. This year's Conference theme was *75 Years, One Purpose*, in honor of Al-Anon's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This year as we celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> year, there are 22,452 registered Al-Anon groups worldwide, in 135 countries, speaking 43 languages.

"The WSC is the permanent body for the expression of the conscience of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship in the light of our Traditions" 2026-2029 Service Manual (P-24/27), p.82. It is Al-Anon's largest group conscience.

Conference was opened with a "Catching Up Conversation", where WSC members were invited to share leftover thoughts and remaining feelings that we might still be holding from the close of last year's Conference and since; a sort of clearing the air that set the tone for the beginning of our 66<sup>th</sup> year of conversation, allowing us to be fully and spiritually present.

A review of Concept 6 reminded us that "just as the Al-Anon groups can act decisively...only by entrusting authority and responsibility to their WSC, so must the WSC...entrust administrative authority to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) in order that its Trustees may act freely and effectively in the absence of the WSC" [excerpted from] 2026-2029 Service Manual (P-24/27), p.191. The key elements of Concept 6 are trust, authority, freedom, equality, participation, respect, Goodwill, listening, and open-mindedness. I witnessed each of these principles alive and at work during the 2026 World Service Conference.

**Spiritual Component of Conference** Before I dive into the business discussed at Conference, I want to try to relay through words a little bit about the spiritual nature of the week. You are about to hear about the various in-depth conversations we had, and I particularly wanted you to hear the following:

- 8 optional Al-Anon meetings were offered, including one outside on the grounds at WSO, overlooking "Lois" pond", discussing the topic "how am I a spiritual clearinghouse?"
- Several 3-minute spiritual speaker talks were given each day by the Delegates of the outgoing panel 64
- We took a "spiritual walk"
- A Conference-wide discussion on Concept 4 took place, with reflections on both avoiding dominance at the mic and encouraging all voices, even those that were nervous or new
- WSO staff, volunteers, the BOT and the EC lined the sidewalk at WSO as our busses arrived to "welcome us home"
- We heard our International Representative, Alicia from Mexico share, through use of a translator that "we are all at home no matter where we get together; I call these the sacred

rooms of Al-Anon because that is where we breathe peace; In Al-Anon, we all know each other, even if we've never met". There are currently 3,432 meetings in Mexico.

I have included some quotes I heard at Conference throughout my report, that meant something to me, maybe allowed me to look at things a little differently.

Quote: "Service is the rent I pay for the new life I've been given"

**2025 Financial Report** AFG, Inc.'s 2025 revenue totaled just over \$6.6 million. Sources of revenue include member contributions, literature sales, magazine sales. In 2025, contributions totaled just under \$3.6 million and literature sales totaled \$3.1 million.

*AFG, Inc Financial Revenue and Expenses:*

	2025
Revenue	\$6.6 Million
Expenses	\$6.4 Million

2025 expenses totaled \$6.4 million. Salary and benefits made up 63% of annual expenses. Additional expenses in 2025 included participation in the AA International Convention, publishing the updated Service Manual, and support of international zonal meetings. In 2025, AFG, Inc reported assets of \$16.9 million and liabilities of \$1.3 million. Assets increased from 2024, due mainly to investment gains.

A "clean opinion" was issued by Brown Edwards, LLP for the annual onsite audit, indicating no concerns about the accuracy of the financial statements for 2025.

Quote: "Finance is fun!"

**Group Contributions** 62% of Al-Anon Family groups contributed to the World Service Office (WSO) in 2025. The current cost per group of WSO services is \$357.95 per group. This is the "value received" from WSO by each group. These services include maintenance of the Al-anon.org website and meeting search, individual group services, Conference Approved Literature (CAL), public outreach, international support, digital communications, translation services, and more.

- At the close of 2025, the VA Area had 267 active groups. 133 of those groups made contributions to the WSO in 2025. Total group contributions to WSO from VA Area groups was \$31,333.70, representing that 50% of the groups in our Area contributed to WSO.
- The average annual group contribution, across all groups in the VA Area was \$117.35 (\$31,333.70/267). Of those that contributed, the average annual group contribution was \$235.59 (\$33,133.70/133).

Please remind your groups that Al-Anon is self-supporting and declines outside contributions, so every group contribution matters. As noted in the 2026-2029 Service Manual (P-24/27), p.54 "In keeping with Tradition Seven, support of the World Service Office is the responsibility of all Al-Anon members, groups, and service arms".

**Service Manual** The new Service Manual is now available in paper and eBook format, and can also be downloaded in pdf format. Please note that sections related to committees, including thought forces and task forces, as well as Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) have been temporarily removed from the "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" section of the Service Manual because the content relates to the service structure, not the groups at work. These sections will be added to the "World Service Handbook" section of the Service Manual in the next version.

**Core Systems Overhaul** The WSO computer systems are aging and increasingly difficult to support, especially the systems supporting group records, the online bookstore and the meeting search. A plan to update these systems has been finalized and work will begin this month. The project is expected to be completed in 2028. The new accounting software was expected to go live on May 1, 2026!

**Website Redesign** The typical lifespan of a website is 2-5 years; The World Service Office website is 9 years old and requires redesign and updates for security and efficiency purposes. We have surpassed 6M hits on our website, 3M of which were meeting searches!

**The AI-Anon Mobile App** currently supports over 280,000 users

**WSO Human Resource News** There are two staff positions open at the World Service Office – International Member Services Specialist and Associate Director, Group Services. More information can be found on the WSO website at this link: <https://al-anon.org/employment-at-al-anon/> Please consider applying for these positions and pass this information along to your group members.

The Executive Committee recently approved a new hybrid and remote work policy determined by role requirements; anchor days must be spent in the office and up to two remote days will be allowed. Work hours will be in Eastern Standard Time.

### **Important Upcoming Dates**

- The final deadline for submission of shares for the new Personal and Service Sponsorship literature is June 30, 2026. This piece of CAL will be released at the 2028 International Convention.
- The new *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine will be released Q4-26.
- The eBook rollout should be complete by August 2026. eBooks are released in English, Spanish and French.
- Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect will be held October 24, 2026, following Board Week, in Chicago, IL. Once a year, the BOT meet in a different host Area, hosting the membership event with the focus on increased interaction, personal sharing, and engagement. Would the VA Area be interested in hosting this event sometime in the future? If so, I have the details and an application. Road Trip! is currently still an in-person only event.
- The 2028 Al-Anon International Convention will be held Thursday July 20 – Sunday, July 24, 2028, in Minneapolis, Minnesota – Registration opens in September 2027; The International Convention will again include a Day of Connecting, a Kickoff Party, a Love Parade, and Big Meetings. Are you ready to get ready? The estimated cost for a member travelling alone is \$1,776, or \$68/month if you start saving now! And less if you want to get creative with your arrangements or buddy-up. Room cost will be between \$249 and \$259 per night for the two hotels attached to the convention center.

**Chosen Agenda Items (CAI)** Prior to Conference, each Delegate is given the opportunity to submit ideas for WSC conversations called Chosen Agenda Items. The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) responded to our suggestions with a list of 23 Chosen Agenda Item possibilities for Delegates to vote on to determine the top two areas of interest. This year's CAIs were Public Outreach and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

### **CAI #1 – Public Outreach**

WSO's Public Outreach Update:

- Registering AI-Anon for three conventions this year in Montreal, Canada, Charleston, SC and right here in Norfolk, VA the weekend of our fall Assembly.
- Creating a media kit that contains resources for Areas, Districts, and groups
- Using member shares from the Membership Survey in social media posts
- Producing the 2026 *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine

Delegate Reflections on Public Outreach:

- “We are not the only game in town anymore” – there are numerous secular recovery programs, so it is important to communicate that we are a spiritual program, not a religious program
- Professionals need to know that AI-Anon is not an AA for women; we are family and friends of alcoholics who practice the 12 steps ourselves
- The word “alcoholic” is considered stigmatizing these days; counselors now use the term “alcohol use disorder” or “substance use disorder”
- “Emotional wellness is sought-after today and our survey indicates AI-Anon improves it

What can AI-Anon members do to help?

- Make appointments with counselors and social workers to see if they understand who we are
- Go to police departments and share our stories
- Be walking billboards for AI-Anon
- Donate *How AI-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) to local libraries
- Take AFA's and local meeting schedules to bail bond officers
- Small business cards with QR codes on them asking “bothered by someone's drinking?” that are linked back to WSO and Area websites
- Set up AI-Anon tables at AA events

### **CAI #2 – Artificial Intelligence**

Concerns expressed about AI:

- There are two sides to the AI issue – AI using AI-Anon's information and passing themselves off as “AI-Anon Assistants” and us using AI for research and writing help –
- Are we giving up our unique perceptions and perspectives?
- Are we giving up the gift of ourselves in our service role and fully participating/performing to the best of our abilities?
- AI doesn't have the spiritual tone that AI-Anon has
- Concerns about AI recording meetings
- AI is not a member of AI-Anon, so don't ask it for experience, strength and hope
- Concerns reporting errors when AI was used for minutes in a business meeting

- The P65 Oregon Delegate read an excerpt from a December 2025 NYT soliciting subscriptions to “GPT Chat AI-Anon”. For just \$20/month the service can provide answers to all questions related to AI-Anon.

Opportunities related to AI:

- We have 36 “guidelines”, our legacies, that we can use in making our decisions about AI; Let it begin with me (to choose how I use AI) and verify
- The use of AI is being considered during the WSO website redesign in hopes of guiding the use of AI-Anon content by AI engines
- AI can effectively be used to improve writing pieces

At WSO, AI is only used in the context of a paid service. AI-Anon copyrighted materials are never to be uploaded. Nothing related to AI-Anon should be going up into a public space. The suggestion was made that if you have an AI-Anon question, our own literature can be used for research. Our eBooks have search features.

**WSO Project: Passing It On** In response to suggestions and conversations at the 2025 WSC last year, a 7-member Task Force (TF) of WSO Staff, WSO volunteers and past volunteers is forming to create service tools to support Areas in identifying and passing on information from one generation of members and trusted servants to the next. This bridging and empowering of generations through knowledge transfer will include service knowledge, how to collaborate, how to lead effectively, how to guard our legacies, and more. The study guides and tool kits will be created by the 7 member TF with the help of vetted AI-Anon member content developers. These content developers will work on the service tools to be provided to the membership through the Passing It On project. (They want you! – what kind of personal experience do you have that you can share? Sponsorship, Concept 9, collaborating). The application timeline for content developers will be released soon; these will all be AI-Anon members. I will pass along application information as it becomes available.

Quote: “Let’s talk about what we get to do, not what we can’t do. Let’s think about abundance”

**International Service Structures** The International Coordination Committee (ICC) members gave moving reports of their meetings with AI-Anon members and trusted servants around the world. Over the past year, ICC members and staff visited Guatemala, Ecuador, and Costa Rica, attending AI-Anon meetings, meeting with local trusted servants, and participating in workshops. Later this year the International AI-Anon Global Services Meeting (IAGSM), which is held every two years, will be held in Slovenia. There are currently 40 established Global Service Areas (GSOs) around the world and each GSO may send two Delegates to the IAGSM.

Quote: “Anyone can start something but carrying it out is the real challenge.....” – Lois W.

**Choosing a Group’s Name Policy** The 2026 WSC opened this discussion with a brief recap of where we are and the steps that have led us here – most recently, the 2024 WSC voted to update the CAGN policy to be more inclusive; implementation would include removing identifiers from any new group at the time of registration or for any group wishing to change their name; many appeals were submitted to Delegates and WSO following the 2024 WSC. 2025 WSC members voted to pause the implementation of the new policy so Delegates could take the conversation back to their Areas for feedback.

At this year’s 2026 World Service Conference, there was extensive discussion about the policy implementation. Delegates shared feedback from their Areas and Conference members had opportunities to discuss the issue in small groups. The feedback showed no clear path forward, meaning no clear support or direction for allowing or disallowing the use of identifiers in group

names. With no clear guidance one way or the other and a motion to pause that expired during Conference, WSC members reached consensus on an implementation approach to guide WSO Staff moving forward as follows:

- Allow community identifiers such as men, women, parents, adult children, young adults, other gender identification/sexual orientation, etc. in group names.
- Consistently notify the Area Delegate and Area Group Records Coordinator whenever a group submits a registration or name change containing a community identifier to request these trusted servants have a conversation with the group to ensure their group conscience is to welcome anyone affected by someone else's alcoholism in accordance with Tradition Three and advise the World Service Office of the result and decision regarding whether to register the group.
- Develop a plan to increase education opportunities to share experience, strength and hope with Area trusted servants on how to be welcoming to newcomers, especially those who do not match a group's community identifier, and to have conversations with group members regarding group names and welcoming.

The consensus reflects a compromise consistent with Concept Nine, "progress is nearly always characterized by a series of *improving compromises*." *2026-2029 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p.199

Quote: "Al-Anon is the only place where agreement and conflict lead to a deeper understanding"

Quote: "We get to know that God allows us to make U-turns" – Vali F., Executive Director, WSO

Quote: "I've had to learn when I don't see consensus I don't push"

**Electronic Alateen Meetings** In 2020, the Board of Trustees approved a Strategic Plan Strategy to explore Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility. A pilot project team has been working since 2020 to:

- Test feasibility and develop guidance for electronic-only Alateen meetings.
- Pilot a small number of electronic-only Alateen meetings on the Al-Anon app
- Develop Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavior Requirements (EASBR)
- Conduct legal review of the EASBR

After this extensive planning process, including review and discussion at each of the last three World Service Conferences (WSCs), the final proposal for an electronic Alateen registration and training process was presented this year for consideration and approval. Electronic Alateen groups were recognized as Al-Anon Family Groups and the WSC EASBR was adopted. Starting September 1st, Areas may opt in and start the process of registering electronic Alateen meetings and train members as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service-Electronic (AMIAS-E). Currently, our Area registers in-person and hybrid Alateen meetings. If we, as an Area, would like to register electronic Alateen groups, continue holding hybrid Alateen meetings, and train AMIAS-E to serve anywhere in the World Service Conference service structure, then we would "opt in" through a vote of GRs at Assembly. If there is any electronic participation, opting in is required. Whether we opt in or not, teens in our Area may participate in electronic Alateen groups registered in the World Service Conference service structure (the US [including Puerto Rico], Bermuda, and Canada).

It is optional - our Area can opt in and adopt the Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavior Requirements (EASBR) or not. And we have the autonomy to decide.

**Board of Trustee Applications** There are currently two types of Al-Anon Trustees – Trustees at Large and Regional Trustees - with two different application processes:

- **Trustees at Large:** Apply to World Service Office (WSO) by August 15th and then go through the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) and WSO application process

- **Regional Trustees:** Go through an Area application process prior to August 15th and then the Area submits the application, if approved by the Area, to the WSO by August 15th. The Regional Trustee applicant then goes through the same CCT and WSO application process as the Trustee at Large applicants.

While the application process for the two types of Trustees is currently different, the role is the same once they are selected. Concepts Six through Nine establish the role of the Trustees of Al-Anon Family Groups. Any Al-Anon member with ten or more continuous years of membership and service beyond the group level is eligible.

Over the last 20 years the Board of Trustees has been operating at 88% capacity in terms of elected Trustees. As of last year, that percentage had dropped to 72%. During this period, all Trustee at Large positions have been filled, but vacancies have occurred in the Regional Trustee positions.

Following a multiple-year discussion about the challenges of an inconsistent, low number of Regional applicants to serve as Trustees at annual World Service Conferences, including opportunities for Delegates to talk with and gather feedback from the groups within the Areas, a single Trustee process emerged to replace the dual-path Regional Trustee and Trustee At Large application paths on a trial basis, starting in 2028. The trial process includes an expansion of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) to assure regional representation; offers an opportunity to gather in-depth Area feedback on all applicants from an Area; and an enhanced CCT ranking process that factors in current Board and applicant Regional composition.

Under the trial process, there will be one process for members to apply for the Trustee position, with applications due to the World Service Office on June 15th each year. The process will include a consideration of region to encourage a diversity of representation from all regions of the World Service Conference. Area Delegates will be notified of any applications from their Area and will have the opportunity to submit comments to the World Service Office by August 15th. We as an Area will have the autonomy to define our process to provide feedback on Trustee applications from our Area.

**Motions Passed by the World Service Conference** The 2026 WSC members approved the following motions:

- To approve the 2025 Audited Financial Report.
- To approve the 2025 Finance Committee Report.
- To approve the 2025 Annual Report.

- To direct the Staff of the World Service Office to adhere to the following guidelines for implementing the “Choosing a Group’s Name” Policy:
  - Allow community identifiers such as men, women, parents, adult children, young adults, other gender identification/sexual orientation, etc. in group names.
  - Consistently notify the Area Delegate and Area Group Records Coordinator whenever a group submits a registration or name change containing a community identifier to request these trusted servants have a conversation with the group to ensure their group conscience is to welcome anyone affected by someone else’s alcoholism in accordance with Tradition Three and advise the World Service Office of the result and decision regarding whether to register the group.
  - Develop a plan to increase education opportunities to share experience, strength and hope with Area trusted servants on how to be welcoming to newcomers, especially those who do not match a group’s community identifier, and to have conversations with group members regarding group names and welcoming those who do not match the group’s community identifier.
  
- To recognize electronic Alateen groups as Al-Anon Family Groups.
  
- To implement the World Service Conference Electronic Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements (WSC EASBR) as the requirements for electronic Alateen groups to be registered in the WSC Structure.
  
- To recognize the Global Electronic Alateen Safety Minimums as minimums, to be augmented by local geographic legislation related to minors, to allow International Structures to create their own Electronic Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements and begin registering electronic Alateen groups.
  
- To implement a single Trustee selection process including the opportunity for Area feedback on applicants, expanded CCT composition to incorporate Regional participation and application ranking designed to balance current and incoming Board Regional representation as a trial for a minimum three-year trial basis.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to have served and represented you again this year at the 2026 World Service Conference. I am honored by the faith you place in me to be your trusted servant.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Lovern  
 Delegate, Virginia, Panel 65